

“What If? A Tale from Iran”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: a simple life

Proficiency Level: novice to intermediate low (ACTFL Guidelines)

Timing: two to three hours with writing assignment

Content Objectives

For students to:

- understand the characters and relate personalities to everyday people
- be able to describe the setting
- be able to retell the story

Language Objectives

For students to:

- use new vocabulary
- use discourse markers for the sequence of the story
- find meaningful metaphors
- determine the meaning of new words using context clues
- integrate listening, reading, speaking, and writing
- retell the story
- relate the story to a personal experience, first orally, and then in writing

Learning Strategies

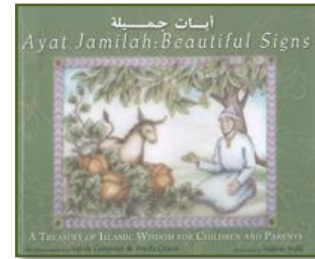
For students to:

- understand the story sequence by building a context
- use discussion skills to consider the lesson of the story as a pre-reading strategy
- use the context of the story to determine the meaning of new vocabulary
- describe the characters when the reading is divided into segments, and then retell the story using discourse markers
- use the reading as a context for writing

Key Vocabulary: dervish, offend, retreat, seldom, rude, wrinkled his brow, fretting, tugged the tip of his beard, disgrace, pace back and forth, wringing, insult, graze, twin, dizzy, gaze, imaginary, flock, furnish, interrupted, fantasy, stirring up a cloud of dust, same vein, scholars, howling, scolded, misbehave, discipline unruly behavior, fond, stammered, sputtering, shattering crack, wrecked, wry smile, cleansing shake of the head, renewed his pledge

Materials

- *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, collected and adapted by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. Boston: Skinner House (2010). Available at www.uuabookstore.org or 800-215-9076 and wherever books are sold.
- mp3 player/recorder



Context Building

Ask the students:

- Have you ever started daydreaming about being rich or being someone else? What was your fantasy? Did you bring yourself back to reality? Do you often go back to the daydream?
- Do you think it's healthy to have daydreams?

Presentation (Teachers)

1. Now that the students have some background for the moral of the story, play the whole story for an overview, without stopping.
2. Play the recorded story again.
3. Play the recorded story a third time and pause at the following parts in order to emphasize their importance:
 - the description of the wealthy businessman
 - the description of the dervish
 - what happened when the pot started to fill with oil
 - what the dervish's dilemma was
 - what he decided to do in his daydreaming
 - first, the sheep
 - then more sheep
 - the fine silk clothes, carpets and furniture

- how he would marry the daughter of a respected visitor
- what interrupted the daydreaming
- how the daydream changed and make the dervish angry
- what he did in the end
- what his resolve was

4. Ask the students:

- What is the moral of the story in your own words?

Practice/Application

1. Retell the story with the students. Start a story chain. Use the new vocabulary in the retelling.

Use sequence markers, for example:

first, second, third
 in the first place, for one thing, then, next
 before, now, after, while
 into, until, last, during
 since, always, later, earlier, in the end, finally

2. Help the students use descriptive adjectives and interesting verbs.
3. Make sure the lesson of the story is clear.

Assessment

Use a dictation to give the students assessment questions. The dictation sequence is: listen, listen and repeat, listen and write, listen and check.

They can write the answers individually and then share with a partner.

1. Describe the character of the dervish.
2. What was his growing dilemma?
3. What was his daydream, and how did it develop?
4. What changed his mind?
5. Is it the nature of a dervish to be angry?
6. Is the moral true to the character of the dervish?
7. Why is the title “What If?”
8. Do you think the moral is true to real life?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:

- What is a simple life? Can you define that for yourself?
- Have you ever wished for more than you already have? What did you wish for and why? What happened to your dream or daydream? Were you happy or unhappy with the result?

2. Tell the students:

- Think about these questions and describe your answers to your partner.
- Record your descriptions.

3. Tell the students:

Use this practice description and your recording to write your paragraph/essay. Divide the writing in this way:

- What is a simple life for most people?
- What is important in life for you?
- What have you wished for that you do not have and why?
- What was the outcome of your wishing? Were you satisfied or not?

4. Follow standard writing process to guide the students into editing and redrafting their descriptions.